

We don't see visitors at this stage, but the information we provide is critical to their decision-making. There are so many choices. It can be confusing and overwhelming. Offering easy to access, well-organised information will put you ahead of your competitors.



### Summary checklist to print off and use

Checklist	Actions
<b>Do you know your customer?</b> Identify your audience. Design your product, service and marketing messages to appeal directly to your target customer.	
<b>Do you know your business?</b> Do you have a clear and exciting proposition that distinguishes you from the competition? Can you sum up your business in one sentence?	
<b>What are others saying?</b> Put your business name into <a href="http://www.google.com">www.google.com</a> <a href="http://www.tripadvisor.com">www.tripadvisor.com</a> and <a href="http://www.visitlondon.com">www.visitlondon.com</a> Do you stand out? Is the information accurate?	
<b>Is everyone getting your message?</b> Re-evaluate the information you provide against the four As: information that is Accessible, Available, Accurate, Appropriate.	

Checklist	Actions
<b>How effective is the design of your website/brochure?</b> Look at the design of competitors' websites and brochures and winners of tourism awards. For imagery ideas go to <a href="http://www.visitlondonimages.com">www.visitlondonimages.com</a> .	
<b>Do you know how to get noticed?</b> Do you have a marketing plan that sets out key messages and how you will communicate them? Keep media up-to-date with developments, awards and new facilities.	
<b>What information do you have on your website/brochure?</b> What information do your key markets require? Make key decision-making information such as price, location, facilities and local attractions easy to find.	
<b>Do you use your star rating effectively?</b> A star rating represents a recognised quality standard. Use it prominently in your marketing materials. If you don't yet have a star rating, sign up now and take advantage of a price subsidy and free business advice.	
<b>Do you work with others?</b> Can you create links with local businesses? They can be a useful source of referral business and can help you provide extra services to customers.	
<b>Do you make the most of London?</b> Try adding a local knowledge page to your website with information on where to change money and best places to eat locally etc.	

Speed of booking plays an important role. If visitors can't book with you quickly they will try your competitor. Visitors want a seamless, painless process with clear pricing and no hidden costs.



Summary checklist to print off and use

“ I do travel a lot within and outside Europe and 90% of my travelling is done through the internet.”  
Italian visitor.



Checklist	Actions
<b>Is it easy and speedy to book?</b> Make sure your booking processes are easy and speedy. From your web homepage it should take no more than two or three clicks to find details on how to book.	
<b>Have you tested your booking system?</b> If you have an online booking system, how long does it take to book? Can visitors save details and come back to finalise later?	
<b>Is your system safe?</b> If you take credit/debit card payments make sure visitors know your system is safe.	
<b>Do you mystery shop your reception service?</b> Are telephone calls handled in a way that inspires confidence that yours is a friendly, well-run, quality business?	

Checklist	Actions
<b>Have you looked at new technology?</b> There are some excellent reservations systems available. Some businesses use text messages to confirm bookings.	
<b>Is your pricing transparent?</b> Are your prices consistent and easy to understand? Are you clear about what is included and excluded? No one likes unexpected charges.	
<b>How do you confirm and follow-up a booking?</b> Follow up every booking so that customers are confident that their request and details are correct and confirmed. Build excitement by sending out details of nearby attractions, popular theatre shows and events.	
<b>No rooms available?</b> If you don't have availability on the exact dates, do you ask your customers if they can be flexible? If you can't secure a booking, ask to keep their contact details and stay in touch.	
<b>Do you make the most of London?</b> Refer customers to <a href="http://www.visitlondon.com">www.visitlondon.com</a> for more ideas and inspiration before they travel.	

Some visitors view time spent travelling to their destination as part of the whole exciting experience. For others it is a necessary evil. Remember that your customers, especially those from overseas, may not have your level of understanding about London. Think about the role you can play in making their journey as hassle-free as possible.

“The hotel sent us specific instructions of how to get from the airport to the station and then options if we wanted to walk or get a cab. It was really useful.”  
American visitor.



### Summary checklist to print off and use

Checklist	Actions
<b>Do you provide directions on your website/email?</b> Consider the key points where your visitors enter London (airports, rail stations) and provide a set of easy-to-follow instructions.	
<b>Are your business name, telephone number and full postal address prominent on your website?</b> Make sure your postcode is clear for Sat Nav systems and online route planners.	

Checklist	Actions
<b>Do you provide information on public transport?</b> A link to Transport for London's Journey Planner will help your customers find route and timetable information.	
<b>What is the best route from the underground?</b> Give an indication of walking times from the nearest station, together with comparative taxi prices.	
<b>Can you advise on Congestion Charging?</b> Include a map and information on fees with a link to <a href="http://www.cclondon.com">www.cclondon.com</a>	
<b>Do you know where your nearest Blue Badge parking is?</b> Find out from <a href="http://bluebadge.direct.gov.uk/">http://bluebadge.direct.gov.uk/</a>	
<b>Can you provide information on accessible transport options?</b> Include a link to <a href="http://www.tfl.gov.uk">www.tfl.gov.uk</a> , which has a section on transport accessibility and getting around.	
<b>Do you make the most of London?</b> Make visitors aware of National Rail's Days Out Guide and railcards.	

This is where you have the most influence and direct responsibility for getting it right. Visitors like to be welcomed. They may have come a long way and made a great deal of effort to reach you. What will their first impression be? How can you make their stay extra special?

“ It’s easy to overlook the details. Put yourself in your visitors’ shoes and take a walk around your accommodation. If you spot something that disappoints you, it may have disappointed tens or hundreds of visitors before you. ”

Mandy Lane, LiveTourism.




Summary checklist to print off and use

Checklist	Actions
<p><b>What is the first impression of your accommodation?</b> Take time out each day to walk around and look at your business as a visitor does. Maintain a well-kept exterior, quality interior and offer a friendly welcome.</p>	
<p><b>How do you welcome visitors?</b> Do you give visitors a personal welcome? Is there anything you can do to help visitors on their first day/evening e.g. book a table at a local restaurant?</p>	

Checklist	Actions
<p><b>What if visitors arrive early or late?</b> Can you be flexible and offer an early check-in or a luggage storage facility?</p>	
<p><b>Do you encourage interaction between staff and visitors?</b> Visitors look for enthusiasm and willingness to assist. Consider coaching and mentoring to help staff deliver a warm welcome and friendly attitude.</p>	
<p><b>Are your front line staff trained in customer service?</b> Experience shows that businesses with valued staff have high levels of staff retention.</p>	
<p><b>How do you ‘go the extra mile’?</b> Help visitors to celebrate special occasions, share your local knowledge of London be flexible and responsive to visitors’ needs.</p>	
<p><b>Do you make the most of London?</b> Consider planning a route in a black cab, suggesting a bus sightseeing tour and providing themed information e.g. London for children, hidden gems.</p>	

It's the day of departure and if all has gone well, your visitor will be content with their stay and sad to be leaving. What can you do to make their journey home easier? This is the best opportunity you have to seek feedback. Don't miss it.



Summary checklist to print off and use

Checklist	Actions
<p><b>What facilities do you have in place for early or late checkout?</b> If visitors want to check out early, can you offer a morning alarm, breakfast option and pre-booked taxi collection? If late, consider a flexible checkout time or promote a secure storage area for luggage.</p>	
<p><b>Do you help with journey planning?</b> However many days they have been staying, your visitor is in an unfamiliar environment. Help visitors with their travel arrangements by having directions, timetables and cost comparisons to hand.</p>	

Checklist	Actions
<p><b>How do you seek feedback?</b> Make it easy for customers to give feedback. Keep comment cards short and include a brief explanation of why you want their feedback. Don't forget to let customers know when you've acted on their feedback.</p>	
<p><b>Do you keep a record of guest preferences?</b> Use a notebook or a computerised Customer Relationship Management system to keep track of regular guests' special preferences.</p>	
<p><b>How do you say farewell for now?</b> Cement the relationship by thanking customers for staying and saying goodbye in person, offering incentives for repeat visits and special offers for referrals to friends and family. Make sure visitors are aware that they can book their next trip before they leave.</p>	
<p><b>Do you make the most of London?</b> Think about producing small promotional items personalised with the name of your accommodation for visitors to take away.</p>	

Your past customers are your best source of future bookings through repeat visits and recommendations. Many businesses send a special personal message a few days after guests have left.

“ We have over 150 regular customers built up over the three years since our refurbishment. Increasingly guests are recommending us to family and friends.”  
 Sean Harte, The Commodore Hotel, Hyde Park.



Summary checklist to print off and use

Checklist	Actions
<b>Do you thank visitors for staying?</b> Consider sending a simple email thanking visitors for choosing your accommodation. Enquire about their trip home and remind them of any incentives for future bookings.	
<b>How do you stay in touch?</b> Keep in touch by email or with a more sophisticated e-newsletter that covers new facilities, staff achievements and awards as well as booking incentives.	

Checklist	Actions
<b>Do you use visitor feedback?</b> If it's time consuming to collate and analyse visitor feedback, consider approaching a local college or university to help out. Make sure you use the findings to understand your visitors' needs and decision-making processes so you can attract them back in the future.	
<b>What's new?</b> How can you keep your product fresh and make sure you have something new to offer every year?	
<b>Do you make the most of London?</b> Include information in your communications about upcoming London events, festivals and new attractions. It will help tempt customers back for a return visit.	